

CLAIMS

1. A content usage management device for managing usage of contents available at a terminal, comprising:

5 change-of-time detection means for detecting a change-of-time event at a terminal which uses the contents; and

control means for updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected
10 change of time.

2. The content usage management device according to claim 1, further comprising:

content storage means for storing the contents; and
15 limitation-on-usage information storage means for storing the limitation-on-usage information about the contents.

3. The content usage management device according to claim
20 1, wherein the limitation-on-usage information includes expiration date information showing an expiration date by which the contents can be used.

4. The content usage management device according to claim
25 3, further comprising:

data communications means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the terminal which uses the contents,

wherein, when the contents are acquired,

the data communications means transmits and receives data
5 to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents,
acquires a remaining time of validity of the contents from the
content distributor, and acquires a current terminal time from
the terminal; and

the control means adds the remaining time of validity
10 to the current terminal time, to thus compute the expiration
date.

5. The content usage management device according to claim
4, wherein the control means compares the current terminal time
15 acquired from the terminal with the expiration date, to thus
determine whether or not the contents are usable.

6. The content usage management device according to claim
4,

20 wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has
detected a change-of-time event of the terminal,

the control means subtracts a current terminal time
achieved immediately before change of the terminal time from
the expiration date, to thus compute a remaining time of validity
25 achieved immediately before change of the terminal time, and

adds the remaining time of validity achieved immediately before
change of the terminal time to the current time of the terminal
achieved immediately after change of the terminal time to thus
compute an expiration date achieved immediately after change
5 of the terminal time, thereby updating limitation-on-usage
information.

7. The content usage management device according to claim
6, wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has detected
10 a change-of-time event of the terminal, the data communications
means acquires from the terminal a current time thereof achieved
immediately before change of time of the terminal and a current
time of the terminal achieved immediately after change of time
of the terminal.

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8. The content usage management device according to claim
1, further comprising:

data communications means for transmitting and receiving
data to and from the terminal which uses the contents; and

20 a storage section having content storage means for storing
the contents and limitation-on-usage information storage means
for storing information about limitations on usage of the
contents, and being configured so as to be removably attached
to the terminal,

25 wherein, when the storage section is attached to the

terminal,

the data communications means transmits and receives data to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents and acquires from the content distributor a remaining time of validity of the contents; and

the control means adds the remaining time of validity to a current time of the terminal, to thus compute the expiration date, and stores the expiration date into the limitation-on-usage information storage means.

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9. The content usage management device according to claim 8, wherein the data communications means acquires from the terminal a current time thereof when the storage section is attached to the terminal.

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10. The content usage management device according to claim 1, wherein the limitation-on-usage information includes expiration date information showing an expiration time by which the contents can be used and reference time information showing a reference time which serves as a reference for limitations on usage of the contents.

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11. The content usage management device according to claim 10, further comprising:

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data communications means for transmitting and receiving

data to and from a terminal which uses the contents,

wherein, when the contents are acquired,

the data communications means transmits and receives data
to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents,

5 acquires a remaining time of validity of the contents from the
content distributor as the expiration date, and acquires from
the terminal a current time thereof as the reference time.

12. The content usage management device according to claim
10 11, wherein the control means subtracts the reference time from
the current time of the terminal acquired thereof to thus compute
a time during which the contents have been used, and compares
the time during which the contents have been used with the
expiration time, thereby determining whether or not usage of
15 the contents are usable.

13. The content usage management device according to claim
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wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has
20 detected a change-of-time event of the terminal,

the control means computes a time during which the contents
have been used, by means of subtracting the reference time from
the current time of the terminal, computes an expiration date
achieved immediately after change of the time of the terminal
25 by means of subtracting the time during which the contents have

been used from the expiration time achieved immediately before
change of time of the terminal, and updates limitation-on-usage
information by means of taking the current time of the terminal
achieved immediately after change of the time of the terminal
5 as a new reference time.

14. The content usage management device according to claim
13, wherein, when the change-of-time detection means has
detected a change-of-time event of the terminal, the data
10 communications means acquires from the terminal a current time
thereof achieved immediately before change of time of the
terminal and a current time of the terminal achieved immediately
after change of time of the terminal.

15 15. The content usage management device according to claim
1, further comprising:

data communications means for transmitting and receiving
data to and from the terminal which uses the contents; and
a storage section having content storage means for storing
20 the contents and limitation-on-usage information storage means
for storing information about limitations on usage of the
contents, and being configured so as to be removably attached
to the terminal,

wherein, when the contents are acquired,
25 the data communications means transmits and receives data

to and from a content distributor which distributes the contents,
and acquires from the terminal a current time thereof achieved
at the time of acquisition of contents; and

5 wherein, when the storage section is attached to the
terminal,

the data communications means acquires from the content
distributor a current time thereof achieved at the time of
attachment of the storage section; and

10 the control means subtracts the current time of the content
distributor achieved at the time of acquisition of the contents
from the current time of the content distributor achieved at
the time of attachment of the storage section to thus compute
a time during which the contents have been used until attachment
of the storage section, subtracts the time during which the
15 contents have been used from a previous expiration date stored
in the limitation-on-usage information storage means to thus
compute an expiration date achieved after attachment of the
storage section, and stores the expiration date into the
limitation-on-usage information storage means.

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16. The content usage management device according to claim
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wherein, when the storage section is attached to the
terminal,

25 the data communications means acquires from the terminal

a current time thereof; and

the control means stores the acquired current time of the terminal in the limitation-on-usage information storage means as a reference time achieved after attachment of the storage section.

17. The content usage management device according to any one of claims 1 through 16, further comprising:

current time acquisition means for independently acquiring from the terminal a current time thereof.

18. A memory card device having a content usage management function, comprising:

content storage means for storing contents available at a terminal;

limitation-on-usage information storage means for storing limitation-on-usage information about the contents;

data communications means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the terminal which uses the contents;

change-of-time detection means for detecting a change-of-time event of the terminal; and

control means for updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected change of time.

19. A portable terminal apparatus having a content usage management device for managing usage of contents which are available on a terminal, comprising:

change-of-time detection means which detects, as the
5 content usage management device, a change-of-time event of the terminal which uses the contents; and

control means for updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected change of time.

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20. The portable terminal device according to claim 19, further comprising:

display means for displaying the updated limitation-on-usage information.

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21. A method for managing usage of contents which are available at a terminal, comprising:

a step of detecting a change-of-time event of a terminal which uses the contents; and

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a step of updating limitation-on-usage information about the contents in accordance with the detected change of time.

22. A program for causing a computer to execute the respective steps of the method for managing usage of contents defined in
25 claim 21.